

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Nativity arts

Image of the day



Nativity arts

Crocheted Post box nativity scenes are proving popular even when snow falls.

This year has seen a great variety of art work in schools, churches and communities.

The **Parish of St Paul & St Barnabas** in Belfast are taking part in ROC Northern Ireland's **Nativity trail**. The parish texted, "If you are in the area why not check out some of the artwork and follow the trail to learn more about the



Christmas Story. Thanks to ROC North Belfast for organising it all”.



Castleberg Methodist Circuit's Living Nativity 2023

The cast thanked “everyone who came and supported our novel take on the Christmas Nativity Story over the past couple of nights.

“We hope you enjoyed watching it as much as we did performing it and that it has got you in the festive spirit

“Also, a big Thank You to everyone behind the scenes who helped with props, costumes, animals and catering .”



Nativity image in Bethlehem

The powerful nativity image at the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. The reality and not the romanticized images we have grown used to.

How will we be presenting the reality of Christmas?

From Munther Isaac in Bethlehem:



“Christmas in Palestine this year.
The Child under the rubble.
Immanuel God is with us in our pain and suffering.
God in solidarity with the oppressed.
The child of Bethlehem is our hope.
For the children of Gaza
and all victims of wars, we pray...”



Pictured L– R: Robert Robinson, Group Commander David McComiskey, Chief Constable Jon Boucher, Canon John Auchmuty, Olwen McIlroy, Nicola Connery, Gary Greer and Dr Joe McKee, Parish Organist & Choral Director.

Senior community members join Knock Advent service

“It was a great delight to welcome senior members of our local community to read the lessons in St Columba’s for our candlelit Advent Carol Service”, said Canon John Auchmuty, Rector of St Columba’s Knock

“An important part of our parish ministry and outreach is reflected in our involvement in our local schools, the Fire Service and the Police Headquarters at Brooklyn which is situated within our parish boundaries.

“Special guests included PSNI Chief Constable, Jon Boucher, Group Commander David McComiskey (NIFRS), Robert Robinson, Headmaster of Campbell College, Olwen McIlroy, Principal of Belmont Primary School, Nicola Connery, Principal of Strathearn School, and Gary Greer, Principal of Bloomfield Collegiate School.

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“It was most encouraging to welcome so many people to the service with such inspirational music and powerful bible readings at the beginning of Advent. The collection was allocated to the NI Children’s Hospice”.



Advent of an archdeacon in Clogher

Clogher Diocesan Advent Carol Service included the installation of the new Archdeacon of Clogher.

The beginning of Advent was marked in Clogher Diocese with a special Carol Service and the installation of the Venerable Paul Thompson (Second left) as Archdeacon of Clogher.



The service in St. Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen, was conducted by the Dean of Clogher, the Very Revd Kenneth Hall (First left) on Sunday evening, the first Sunday of Advent.

The service began with the processional hymn, "O Come, O come, Emmanuel," led by the Cathedral Choir singing by candlelight.

Other hymns sung during the service included; "Waken O sleeper, wake and rise," "Come, thou long-expected Jesus," "On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry," "Magnificat," "Hail to the Lord's anointed" and "Lo! he comes with clouds descending." The organist was Mr. Glenn Moore.

The mandate for the installation of the new Archdeacon was read by the Diocesan Registrar, Revd Canon John McClenaghan and the installation was conducted by Dean



Kenneth Hall. This year marks the 285th anniversary of the granting of the seal of the Dean and Chapter of Clogher.

The readings were by Mrs Lorraine Thompson, Derryvullen North and Castle Archdale Parishes; Miss Kendal Campbell, Castle Archdale Parish; Miss Sophie Armstrong, Castle Archdale Parish; Mr Michael Skuce MBE, and Miss Irene Knox, both members of the Diocesan Council; Revd Canon Stephen Hazlett, Rector of St. Mary's and Greyfriars, Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway, Scottish Episcopal Church and Very Revd Canon Kevin Duffy PP, Parish Priest of Devenish (Irvinestown).

There were three special pieces performed; "Christ, whose glory fills the skies" sung by Alice Bradley, of Derryvullen North Parish; the anthem, "Chorale" from Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme by Bach sung by the Cathedral Choir and "Colours of day" sung by Marion Faris, Carol Clarke and Iris Robinson accompanied by David McDowell on guitar.

The service concluded with an Advent Reflection by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr. Ian Ellis who also gave the Blessing.

Connor Canon for Christmas



Dean Sam Wright welcomes the Rev Canon Amanda Adams to the Chapter of St Saviour, Connor.

The Reverend Amanda Adams, rector of the Grouped Parishes of Ballyrashane and Kildollagh, was installed as a Canon of Lisburn Cathedral at a service in the Cathedral on Sunday.

Her installation as Prebendary of Connor preceded the Rev Canon James Carson being installed as Chancellor, the Rev Canon William Taggart as Precentor and the Rev Canon Peter Galbraith as Treasurer in the Chapter of St Saviour, Connor. These changes follow the retirement of the Rev Canon George Graham.



The Chapter of St Saviour's, Connor, pictured at the installation of Amanda Adams as Canon in Lisburn Cathedral on Sunday December 3. Front row, from left: Archdeacon Stephen McBride, Dean Sam Wright, Canon Amanda Adams and Archdeacon Paul Dundas. Back row, from left: Canon Chris Easton, Canon Peter Galbraith, Canon Mark McConnell, Canon William Taggart, Canon Derek Kerr and Canon James Carson.

The installations were conducted by the Dean of Connor, the Very Rev Sam Wright, and the preacher was the Rev Canon James Carson.

Canon Adams was supported by friends, vestry and congregational members of The Grouped Parishes of Ballyrashane & Kildollagh which is located about as far as one can travel within the diocese from the cathedral.

In the media

Most Jews think corporation's Gaza conflict coverage is biased - Daily Telegraph

More than three quarters of Jewish people think the BBC's coverage of the war in Gaza is biased against Israel, a survey has found, Gordon Rayner writes

The BBC has faced criticism since it refused to describe Hamas as terrorists in the wake of the Oct 7 massacre. It now says in its reports that Hamas is designated as a terrorist organisation by the Government.

An opinion poll commissioned by The Jewish Chronicle newspaper suggests that British Jews do not feel the BBC has done enough to address accusations of bias in its reporting.

47pc - The proportion of Jewish respondents who said they feel unsafe on the street as a result of Hamas's war with Israel

It shows that 77 per cent of Jewish people surveyed regard the BBC's reporting of the war as biased against Israel, with just 11 per cent thinking coverage is impartial.

Marie van der Zyl, the president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, has expressed "outrage" at the BBC's reporting, and a spokesman for the organisation said her view remained unchanged.

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Tim Davie, the BBC's director-general, has taken on oversight of the corporation's complaints unit amid complaints about bias and anti-Israel comments, often from presenters.



[David Rose was writing in The Jewish Chronicle](#)

In October, he had to apologise after a BBC reporter suggested Israel was responsible for a missile attack on a hospital in Gaza which quickly turned out to be a mis-fired rocket launched within the Gaza Strip.

Presenters on the BBC Asian Network have posted anti-Israel material on social media, as The Daily Telegraph reported last month. Staff working in news and current affairs have also been told not to take part in marches against anti-Semitism.

A BBC spokesman said: "The BBC holds itself to high standards of impartial reporting and rejects the suggestion

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that we are biased against Israel. The conflict is a challenging and polarising story to cover, and we are dedicated to providing impartial reporting for audiences in the UK and across the world.

“Our own audience research shows that BBC News is considered the most impartial provider for coverage of the conflict. Recent research by More in Common echoes this and shows the highest proportion of people in Britain sees the BBC as neutral. BBC News will continue to listen carefully to all audience feedback.”

Meanwhile, the poll by The Jewish Chronicle’s also shows that almost half (47 per cent) of British Jews feel unsafe on the street as a result of Hamas’s war with Israel.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Assembly resources from UK Safer Internet Centre

For [#SaferInternetDay](#) each of UK SIC resource packs contains a whole school assembly! These are designed for use with either 3-11 year olds or 11-18 year olds, and are the perfect way to kick off your learning! Find out more and download the resources here

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2024/education-resources>



3-11 Assembly

Settings
Some settings change on your game

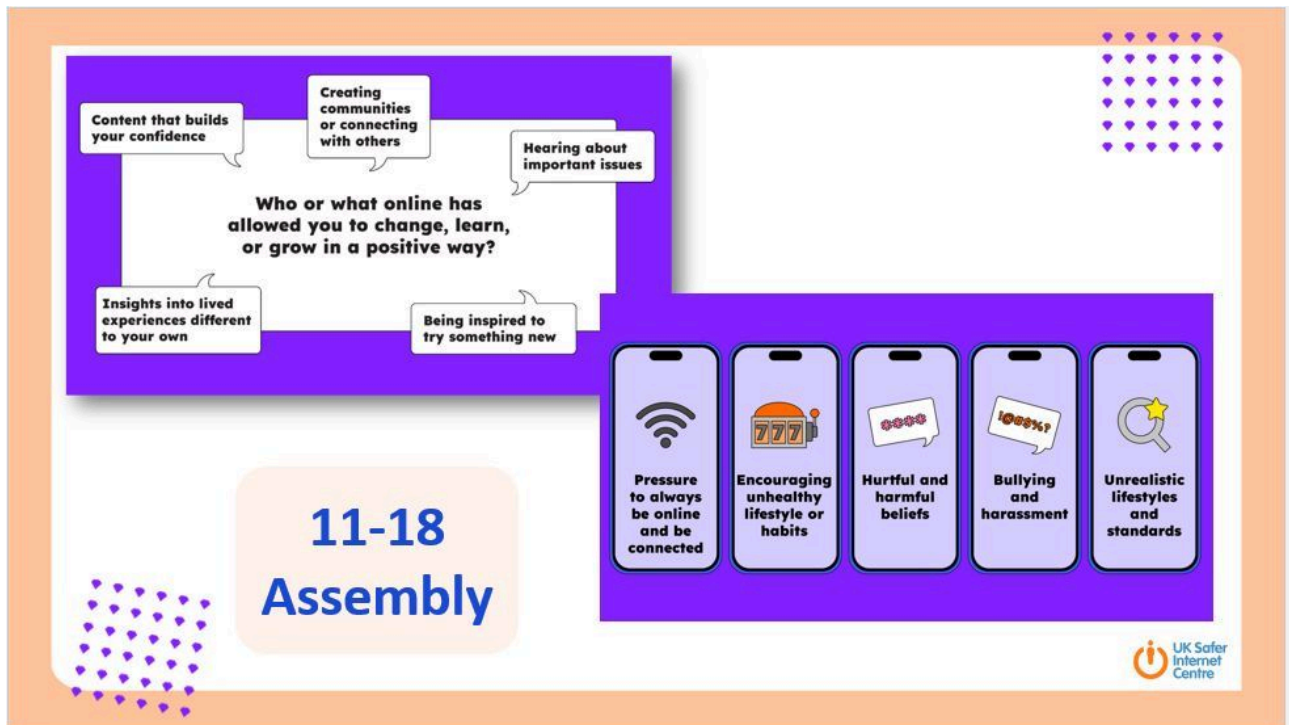
A character online look different

The Safer Internet Day poem
Going online can be so much fun,
You can play and chat, and find out.
But when things change and you feel unsure,
Then that's when it's time to shout...
"Something has changed, and I need some help,
What's happening doesn't feel good."
Things will get better when a trusted adult knows,
And your feelings have been understood.

Who are the trusted adults you could talk to about things online?

- Parents or carers
- Auntie and Uncle
- Teacher and teaching assistant
- Sports club leader
- Grandparents

UK Safer Internet Centre



11-18 Assembly

Who or what online has allowed you to change, learn, or grow in a positive way?

- Content that builds your confidence
- Creating communities or connecting with others
- Hearing about important issues
- Insights into lived experiences different to your own
- Being inspired to try something new

Pressure to always be online and be connected

Encouraging unhealthy lifestyle or habits

Hurtful and harmful beliefs

Bullying and harassment

Unrealistic lifestyles and standards

UK Safer Internet Centre

Holywell Trust Conversations on domestic violence in NI

Women in Northern Ireland are twice as likely to be murdered as a result of domestic violence than in the other UK nations. In some years, almost half of Northern Ireland

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murders are connected to domestic violence. In the 2022/23 year, of 17 homicides there were 8 that resulted from domestic violence against women.

Podcast Episode 1 -

<https://www.holywelltrust.com/htc-episode-1-gfa-analysis-opens-new-podcast-series>

Watch Advent Carol Service from Canterbury

On Sunday Canterbury cathedral celebrated the start of Advent with music, readings, and the lighting of candles, at its Advent Carol Service.

You can watch it online: <https://youtu.be/HALOQbh0S2k>

Perspective

JFK's assassination 60 years ago marked the start of America's moral disintegration - Laura Perrins

The 60th anniversary of the assassination of President John F Kennedy, passed on the 22 November 1963 marking when he was gunned down in Dallas Texas by a communist, writes Laura Perkins in the Catholic Herald.

A Democrat, Kennedy was the first Catholic president of the United States at a time when the WASP aristocracy still

dominated American public life. Kennedy was an ardent anti-communist and in his inauguration speech on 20 January 1961 stood for natural rights declaring, “and yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe. The belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God”.

Kennedy ended his speech with the now famous challenge to the American people: “And so, my fellow Americans: Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.” It was a challenge that electrified America.

This stands in stark contrast to today where generally people demand that their country does ever more for them, while offering very little in return.

I believe that the assassination of Kennedy in 1963 marked when things began to fall apart in the United States. It was not until 1968 however that the deep divisions in the United States became permanent, when the centre finally “could not hold”.

Kennedy, being a fierce anti-communist, had escalated US involvement in the Vietnam War, something that his Vice President and then-President Lyndon Johnson had to inherit. However, at the time of Kennedy’s election in the middle of the Cold War there was a sense of hope. He and his beautiful and glamorous wife Jackie were the new generation. Kennedy was 27 years younger than his predecessor, President Dwight D. Eisenhower. There was still a sense of unity and shared values among Americans even if they shared different political or religious views.

It would be naive to suggest that the political landscape was not cut-throat; it was, and there was much hatred and religious bigotry targeted against Kennedy. Nonetheless most Americans watched the same TV and women and men did not hate each other as the feminist revolution had not yet crashed on American suburbia. Americans with a wide range of incomes shared the same neighbourhood and their kids went to the same schools, unlike today as explained by Charles Murray in *Coming Apart*.

It was a huge development and achievement for Irish Americans and Catholics to claim the President as one of their own. President Kennedy was a member of the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal charitable order. His assassination caused devastation for the Catholic Community in the United States.

George Weigel, when marking the 50th anniversary of the tragic killing of Kennedy wrote, “On Nov. 22, 1963, the seventh grade at Baltimore’s Cathedral School was in gym class when we got word that President Kennedy had been shot. A half-hour later, while we were climbing the stairs back to 7B’s classroom, Sister Dolorine’s voice came over the p.a., announcing that the president was dead. Walking into 7B, my classmates and I saw something that shocked us as much as the news we’d just heard: our tough-love homeroom teacher, a young School Sister of Notre Dame, was sobbing, her faced buried in her arms on her desk.”

The same George Weigel also wrote that the then-Senator Kennedy’s 1960 speech, made in response to the vicious anti-Catholic bigotry of the election campaign, on church-

and-state relations delivered to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association had the effect of privatising and sidelining religious belief.

Kennedy stood up for religious freedom, but he also said, “I believe in a president whose religious views are his own private affair, neither imposed by him upon the nation, nor imposed by the nation upon him as a condition to holding that office.

“Whatever issue may come before me as president — on birth control, divorce, censorship, gambling or any other subject — I will make my decision in accordance with these views, in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressures or dictates. And no power or threat of punishment could cause me to decide otherwise.”

The result was that other politicians could bring their moral conviction into their public roles, based on who knows what, but it became difficult if not impossible for a Catholic politician to do the same.

This approach created problems. As GK Chesterton observed, “when a man stops believing in God, he doesn’t then believe in nothing, he believes anything.” We can see that removing God from people’s lives does not leave logic and reason. Instead, this God-sized void has been filled with dangerous nonsense that is woke-ism.

Nonetheless Kennedy remains an inspirational figure to many. A brilliant man cut down by the communist forces he so fiercely opposed.

Poem for today

Winter-Time

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,
At morning in the dark I rise;
And shivering in my nakedness,
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit
To warm my frozen bones a bit;
Or with a reindeer-sled, explore
The colder countries round the door.

When to go out, my nurse doth wrap
Me in my comforter and cap;
The cold wind burns my face, and blows
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;
And tree and house, and hill and lake,
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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